

**BA-Pier Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, December 4th, 2014**  
**1:00pm-3:00pm**  
**Chabot College, Hayward, CA**

**Members Present:**

Shirley Wilson, Peralta CCD	Shimali Puri, The English Center
Susan Sermeno, JFK University	Christie Larusso, Pacific School of Dentistry
Garay Menicucci, Santa Clara University	Shasha Du, Mills College
Kathy Harrington, UCSC Extension	Dolly Balangitao, Chabot College
Koura Fabiny, Santa Clara University	Chikako Walker, Skyline College
Tracey Ward, Mission College	Arthur Levine, Foothill College
Lauren Locke, African Conservation Experience	Lisa Harris, Palo Alto University
Ruth Kirby, Language Pacifica	Manasi Devdhar-Mane, Menlo College
Kristi Radke, Ohlone College	Raymundo Porras, UCSC Extension
Deborah Herlocker, Life Chiropractic College West	Michael Mrache, UCSC Silicon Valley Extension
Lauren Avina, Holy Names University	Maria E. Fraser, California College of Communications
Sarah Bonnel, Santa Clara University	Sara Patterson, West Valley College
Sean Day, Las Positas College	John Babin, Notre Dame de Namur University
Louis Gecenok, SJSU	
Karla David, The English Center	

**I. Welcome from Tracey Ward, Introduction of Lamberto Glory, SEVP Field Rep, SF District/Northern Bay Area Field Representative (FRU).**

**II. SEVP Field Representative Presentation and Q & A, Lamberto Glory:**

All slides of today's presentation prepared by team at SEVP headquarters

- FRU Rep Intro/mission
- FRU Geographical regions and territories
- FRU duties
- FRU vs. Project Campus Sentinel
- Field Representative training course overview
- Deployment schedule
- News from the field
- How to provide feedback on your experience with an SEVP Field representative

FRU Mission, Key Points:

- Serve as a liaison between SEVP and SEVP certified schools or schools seeking initial certification
- Provide localized customer service to school officials
- Enhance national security by fostering regulatory compliance and SEVIS data integrity
- DSO verification is new part of SEVIS data integrity
- West, Central, East Region, about 20 Field Reps in Each
- Meet twice annually with certified school sin their region who enroll active F or M students (schools without will receive an annual visit, or contact, via phone or email)

- Help school officials with SEVP certification and recertification processes by conducting school site visits

*Field Representative Duties vs. Project Campus Sentinel:*

Field Reps are authorized for the following activities:

- Ensure SEVP certified school understand SEVP rules and regulations
- Answer general questions related to the nonimmigrant student process
- Provide training and assistance to DSOs
- Attend conferences and training in their region

Project Campus Sentinel:

The Counter Terrorism and Criminal Exploitation Unit (CTCEU), Project Campus Sentinel is comprised of federal government agents that provide school officials with:

- Tools to help identify possible national security within their F and/or M student population. The proper channels to report information concerning fraud and visa exploitation
- A lot of students are overstaying visas after their programs are completed, but this is a relatively low priority for ICE at the time being.

*Training Topics:*

- New SEVP policies, procedures, and directives (including PDSO/DSO verification).
- Legislative and regulatory training
- School Certification Unit processes and procedures
- Frequently asked questions

*FRU Weekly Schedule:*

- Visit schools 4 days per week
- Your field rep will coordinate with DSOs regarding a day and time for visit
- Field reps will work with DSOs to develop a meeting agenda prior to the visit
- Spend one day per week at home office

*Deployment Schedule:*

- First Class (deployed April 21, 2014)
- Second class deployed Nov. 17, 2014
- Third and fourth will be deployed in 2015 (now accepting applications via USAJobs for remaining Field Reps)

*News from the Field:*

- Since deployment, FRUs have conducted over 1800 school visits and enhanced relationships with DSOs within their respective territories
- Positive feedback from the academic community

*SEVP Values your Feedback:*

- Field Rep Feedback Form

- Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey

*Government Resources:*

- Study in the States
- SEVP Publications

*SEVP Contact:*

- SEVP Response Center
- Help Desk

*Q & A with Lamberto Glory:*

**BA-PIER Member:** Guidance regarding hybrid and residency programs?

**Lamberto Glory:** No policy created yet, still waiting for this guidance. They have to consult with state department, as they are the entity issuing the visas.

**Tracey Ward:** When will draft policy guidance come out?

**Lamberto Glory:** No timeline yet for this.

**BA-PIER Member:** Hybrid program, optional 1-week intensive. Filled out I-17 to obtain permission for this program (one week period), and this was approved. I-17 fields are not conducive to adding 1-week optional intensive language, was instructed what language to use.

**Lamberto Glory:** A formal policy is still being developed, and FRUs will speak with their supervisors regarding this type of program. Make sure it is consistent because no formal policy exists.

**BA-PIER Member:** DSOs have multiple responsibilities--difficult to schedule a group meeting with FRU. Is it required for all DSOs to be present at FRU meetings?

**Lamberto Glory:** NO, but it is highly preferred.

**BA-PIER Member:** How do you reconcile PDSOs (such as president) not knowing much about SEVIS (such as a President/Owner)?

**Lamberto Glory:** This can come to light in an investigation. They need to be aware of the regulations that they sign for having knowledge of. SEVP field reps have DSO training manuals that can be obtained from FRU for training purposes. Sometimes a DSO is not even present (headquartered in NY, for example).

**BA-PIER Member:** Is the FRU role investigatory? Why do they ask questions about OPT and CPT, reinstatements, etc.?

**Lamberto Glory:** Field reps use these questions to see where school representatives are in their training and knowledge. How many active students? How many OPT? CPT? Reinstatements? It's a good idea to prepare this information prior to the FRU visit. Good idea to keep track of this information semester by semester. They may ask you further questions, such as "do you have any questions regarding OPT? Problem situations?" Are the addresses of your students current in SEVIS? Using school address or not? Students transferring from other schools, address is not updated frequently--make sure these are changed! Make sure degree level is changed and all information is updated for the NEW degree program AFTER transfer.

**BA-PIER Member:** Does FRU have access to schools records in SEVIS?

**Lamberto Glory:** FRUs can see records for schools across the whole country, but not ALL transactions are visible. Adjudication units may not put any comments, for example.

**BA-PIER Member:** Why is taking SEVP 2 months or more to approve new DSOs? Anything to do to expedite the process? Can the FRU help out in this situation?

**Lamberto Glory:** 300 percent rise in adjudication for new DSOs, so there is a current backlog. Recertification process freezes records. Recommend updating I-17s frequently so it's prepared for Recertification. Schools that do

not currently have a PDSO CAN request expedited processing so that SOMEONE can access SEVIS (call Helpdesk for this).

**BA-PIER Member:** What created the need to have upcoming process of PDSO/DSO verification? Why this additional requirement?

**Lamberto Glory:** Government has requirements to make sure only verified officials access government systems. Particular concern because of worries about hacking and unauthorized access. 100 DSOs out of 700 in Lamberto Glory's territory are probably retired or inactive. One from Portland: PDSO mistakenly terminated an ACTIVE DSO. Now the adjudication to add DSO is backlogged, causing delay.

**Tracey Ward:** Webinar for PDSO verification is on Study in the States. Instruction manuals are all on BA-PIER website in document library--manuals can be downloaded from website.

**Lamberto Glory:** DSO at satellite campuses--have to be done by EACH school code, one at a time.

**BA-PIER Member:** Student from Liberia whose uncle died, student's uncle was source of financial support. Work off campus?

**Lamberto Glory:** Does not have answer, this falls under the jurisdiction of USCIS.

**Michael Mrache:** I-17 request, UCSC extension. Submitted campus update over 2 months ago.

**Lamberto Glory:** May take anywhere between 1-6 months. They may be making updates to the CED date (extensions, etc.)

**BA-PIER Member:** Should you do the verification for PDSO/DSO BEFORE recertification?

**Lamberto Glory:** Can you do recertification now? You do not need to wait until March. But will seek more information about this.

**Tracey Ward:** The two are NOT linked, so even if I-17 is locked for Recert, DSO/PDSO verification is separate and can be update.

**BA-PIER Member:** Contacted in group email by Field Rep. Do we need to respond to basic introductory email?

**Lamberto Glory:** DON'T need to respond to those, each school will be contacted separately prior to visit.

### **III. Follow up on NAFSA Bi-Regional Conference, Questions, and Discussion (student/immigration issues)**

**Tracey Ward:** Any information or handouts that can be shared? Still working on document library on BA-PIER website. Manuals for verification (PDSO/DSO), Change of Status information, and Affordable Care Act information is up on doc library.

#### **Introductions around the table.**

SEVIS Recertification (round 2)

**Tracey Ward:** Given 10 days to redo ALL I-20s (including initial I-20s)! (IEP program/conditional admission) Change of level at the end of IEP program. They used to issue I-20 for TOTAL range (including IEP and academic program). Even though policy guidance is in draft phase, they're still implementing it already.

Any other interesting notes from conference? From regulatory gods? (A lot weren't there).

A lot is still in draft policy guidance phase--not a lot has been formally implemented as official policy. New F-2 policies moving toward draft policy guidance. May start actually allowing F-2s to study part-time in degree and/or certificate programs. Possibly moving forward next year?

**Lisa Harris:** Language for F-2s has always been non-academic programs incidental to their main purpose. Anything in a degree-seeking program is NOT allowed.

**Tracey Ward:** Always interpreted this to mean NO CREDIT courses. Regs may change to allow part-time work towards a degree/certificate?

**Group discussion:** Impact of regs related to H-4 status, F-2 status, permanent residence.

**BA-PIER Member:** Campus Sentinel requested information for a specific student to investigate prior school.

**Lamberto Glory:** Doing site visits as part of new program to verify legitimacy of campuses. When agents call your school and they want a list of students: Ask director or school lawyers, "are we authorized to provide this information?" Ask agent to send copy of credentials prior to releasing information.

**Tracey Ward:** Ask them to send/email an actual subpoena or warrant of some kind. Usually arrives within 48 hours. You can request this with USCIS as well.

**Group discussion:** Different requests from information from CBP, FBI, other government authorities.

**Lamberto Glory:** Document *everything* when information is requested.

**Lisa Harris:** SEVIS records need to be kept by regulation for 3 years, but better to hold on to records for longer for student requests for information.

**Tracey Ward:** Her school uses scanning solutions to keep historical records.

**Susan Sermeno:** Transcripts from previous schools. Are those institutional property? Should only be given copies, and only upon subpoena.

**Tracey Ward:** Interesting issue--applied for OPT early, got approved before end of semester. Gotten EAD card, but problem is he is going to flunk a class he needs to graduate. Is OPT null and void?

**BA-PIER Member:** NO, he can do part-time, but NEEDS the document to be changed to pre-completion OPT.

**BA-PIER Member:** They just had students work part-time on the SAME EAD until they graduate, then move to full-time OPT. Language is in SEVIS Policy Guidance.

**BA-PIER Member:** Change of status to F-1 (initial status B-1). When does stamp expire? If it expires next week, NOPE. It has to reach USCIS in completion before expiration in passport! Will likely just be denied.

**BA-PIER Member:** If the student uses a lawyer, "shut up!" Student should consult with lawyer them self.

Must apply in a timely manner for change of status. Hang onto confirmation of receipt of application! This proves that you have a pending application.

**Tracey Ward:** They receive RFEs for the new I-20 nine out of ten times during COS.

**BA-PIER Member:** Sometimes they can request updated financial documentation if enough time has passed.

**BA-PIER Member:** RFE for I-20 for an OPT application. Wanted another copy? Maybe they thought signature was inaccurate?

**BA-PIER Member:** After merge of the helpdesk: "Your wait time is 'ten minutes'". Waiting one hour, then disconnected.

**Group Discussion:** new helpdesk merge/accessing people/technical difficulties.

**Group Discussion:** New vacation policies (mainly impacts IEPs rather than academic programs)

**BA-PIER Member:** ELS program on campus for 4 weeks, then transfer I-20 to academic institution once English proficiency has been achieved.

**BA-PIER Member:** Visa will expire May next year, but going home this winter break. Will they issue it this early?

**Group Discussion:** Mix responses from BA-PIER members.

**Susan Sermeno:** Visas are expired. Going home and asking for new visa while waiting for OPT?

**Group Discussion:** General consensus—don't do it, too risky! Application may be considered abandoned if the student leaves. Some students HAVE been successful obtaining a visa in this situation. At minimum, carry evidence that OPT has been applied for already. Get document from USCIS tracking, also maybe include an employer letter. Carry I-797 with them as well.

**Lisa Harris:** Obtain letter from employer, and if it is in the STEM fields, this helps. Big national push/national interest in STEM fields.

#### **IV. Announcements and next meeting location:**

- February 19th at Santa Clara University